

Black Woman, Indoctrination of The Male, And Subversion of the Patriarchy in Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child*

NASSER MALEKI

Associate Professor of English Literature
Department of English Language and Literature
Razi University
Kermanshah, Iran
n.maleki@razi.ac.ir

PEDRAM LALBAKHS

Assistant Professor of English Literature
Department of English Language and Literature
Razi University
Kermanshah, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present paper approaches Ngugi's Weep Not, Child from a socialist feminist point of view to foreground women's multi-dimensional oppression in the novel and to highlight their attempts to subvert it. While the male characters of the novel have received, more or less, enough attention the female characters seem to be marginalised by the critics who have discussed the female characters more in terms of their relation to the story's male characters. Analysing facets of oppression like sexuality, motherhood, mothering, and domestic labour, we argue that Ngugi establishes a collage of all merits and qualities that women have in terms of leadership and messianic role. In his Weep Not, Child, Ngugi shows us that women's sound judgment and suppressed voice can be an effectively important factor in bringing liberation and equality to people's life. The findings of this study demonstrate that, in contrast to his male characters, Ngugi's female characters are more reliable and more dependable in establishing a political plan to achieve liberation and equal rights. This is while women are abusively exploited and ignored by the men whose impulsive decisions and miscalculated actions bring ruin to both family and society. Ironically, while the patriarchal system aims to metamorphose women's identity, destroy their ego, and affect their confidence and independence, women are clever enough to put emphasis on education as one extremely important sub-strategy to indoctrinate and educate the next generation's male members against patriarchy and patriarchal conduct.

Key Words: Ngugi; Weep Not Child; patriarchy; black woman; male indoctrination

INTRODUCTION

Reading Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child* one may come to different kinds of interpretation depending on the view point from which one is looking at the story. It may be generally read as a novel that tries to explain "cultural and psychological mazes the pre-independence population had to figure out and traverse" (Sollars 2008, p. 863), or a novel about "the

alienation of the African subjects from their lands and traditions, and the culture of violence associated with decolonization” (Gikandi & Mwangi 2007, p. 122). But to be more specific, we can say that it is about the anti-colonial struggles of the Mau-Mau guerrillas against the British regime, about peasants and workers – like Ngotho – who are oppressed and exploited working for the British colonialists but on the land that actually belongs to them; or about the Kenyan culture and whatever Kenyans, like Ngotho, believe in as the messiah and the saviour of the nation. However, we focus on the well-established and deep-rooted systematic patriarchy that is imposed, in an excruciating way, on both white and black female characters of the story. This is while a deep analytic study of the characters shows that female characters are superior to men in mental and psychological terms. Despite this superiority; however, men are dominating women by supporting the prevalent patriarchal ideology because of which beating an angry woman is considered as a part of the tradition in which a man can “[slap] her on the face and raise his hand” to repeat the violence again and again” (WNC, p. 60).

Ironically, the Kenyan woman has continuously been a victim of male and female writers’ negligence who have not paid enough attention to the qualities and capabilities of the Kenyan females. This is where this paper departs from the existing literature on Kenyan novel especially those that refer to Ngugi’s novels. As Kolawole echoes Nnaemeka’s proposition “by omission or commission ... the strong dynamic woman is invisible in many female writers’ works” (1997, p. 65) and this gets worse when we come to the male writers’ writings. That is why Kolawole asserts that the time has come “to create and recreate lifelike representations of the African Everywoman” (67), and demystify her and take her out of the haze of invisibility. Like Kolawole, we believe that “the portrayal of African woman has suffered from incomplete, falsified or distorted theorising” (67) and we are trying here, in this paper, to compensate for this distorted portrait of the African woman in general, and Kenyan woman in particular.

The well-employed, multi-layered narrative style of Ngugi in *Weep Not, Child* exposes moments of omnipresent oppression and suppression in women’s life. Emphasising the colonialists’ cruel oppression, and exploitation of the Kenyans, Ngugi penetrates into families (both white and black) and highlights a more furtive and implicit kind of cruelty and injustice that happens behind the walls. Ngugi’s narrative comes in line with his sympathetic proposition in his preface to *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* where he writes, “We cannot stand on the fence. We are either on the side of the oppressed or on the side of imperialism... we believe that good art is that which is on the side of the most weak ...” (Ngugi 1989, p. viii).

However, talking about Kenyan’s oppression, Ngugi does not fail in paying attention to the women who have a secondary place and come after the land that means everything to both white and black men. A white man, as we see it in the character of Mr. Howlands, understands women and savages in equal terms. They are both assets that are available to and at the disposal of white men. At a moment when Mr. Howlands is contemplating his life and his treatment of black people – as savages who must be wrung to “the last drop till they ... [are] reduced to nothingness” (WNC, p. 87), he suddenly shifts to his wife and likens her to the black people he knows as savages. His decision on not to “give in to either Mau Mau or his wife...[and] reduce everything to his will” (WNC, p. 88) is the evidence to prove this patriarchal mind-set.

In accordance with what Ngugi writes in his *Homecoming* maintaining that he is “interested in [people’s] hidden lives; their fears and hopes, their loves and hates, and how the very tension in their hearts affects their daily contact with other men” (1972, p. 13) Ngugi’s narrator goes beyond the walls, moves around bedrooms and kitchens, blurs the

delicate line between personal and social, and reports any occurrence of oppression and suppression that limits women to their house sphere. Despite its apparent simplicity, Ngugi's novel reflects the Kenyan culture and its underlying patriarchal conduct very effectively. He portrays strong women with highly sensitive minds and great ability of prescience and anticipation that as Lalbakhsh observes can be reliable means of "[subverting] the well-established oppressive and exploitative relations of the society" (2011b, p. 34).

These extraordinary qualities, however, are the outcome of these women's sound judgment and correct evaluation of the circumstances to which men are either ignorant or disastrously indifferent. Ironically enough, these women have to be obedient to some impulsive and emotional men whose judgment and actions are eventually demonstrated to be ruinous and destructive. Yet, since the system is a patriarchal one, men look at women in the same way they look at their properties and their land.

To analyse this picture of dichotomous identities (oppressive males and oppressed females) in this novel, we approach it from a socialist feminist point of view to understand females' oppression as Ngugi depicts it and to identify the different strategies black men and women adopt to fight a colonialist power that has subdued them benefiting from technology and destructive arms and equipment. This will show us, at the end, which strategy seems fruitful and which strategy has ruinous effects and destructive consequences. Such approach to Ngugi's novel will eventually give us a true picture of the Kenyan matri-culture that lies behind Ngugi's story demonstrating that women's mission of educating the next generation can result in genuine hope for a society marked by equality and liberation.

DISCUSSION

Socialist feminism focuses on different aspects of women's lives that are most frequently introduced, by capitalist and patriarchal ideologies, as personal aspects of human existence. Such systems insist that issues like mothering and motherhood, socialization of children, housewifery and domestic labour, and sexuality are all personal issues and if they are facets through which oppression or exploitation is imposed they should be considered personal issues not to be brought to the greater sphere of society and its various institutions. Such idea is to make subjects in the society isolated from each other because the following fragmentation results in the continuation of systems that are based on patriarchy and capitalism.

To fight against such alienating fragmentation, socialist feminists suggest consciousness-raising that is a strategy of sharing experiences and hidden fears resulting in a homogenised texture of subjects who acquire the subversive ability to come together and revolutionise oppressive structures and systems. As Acker and Barry describe it "Consciousness-raising is a technique for revealing experience that has been denied by the dominant ideology" (1984, p. 179). While this strategy has come to be effective during the last decades, Lalbakhsh has added a new dimension to it. What he calls women's mission to indoctrinate the male seems to be a promising addition to take the theory a step further and make it closer to its expected practical function. It is perhaps furthering Hansen's golden statement that "education is the very essence of social change" (1997, p. 237). As Lalbakhsh maintains both capitalism and patriarchy "use mothers as indoctrinators"; that is, through mothers' act of socialization societies "raise agents who will promote the ideology of patriarchy and capitalism" (2011a, p. 95). This metamorphosing process, as he continues, makes "people unable to think otherwise ... subordinate to whatever they are told to think

and to do” (95). He believes that women need to employ this process of socialization to their own benefit and raise children who can stand against oppressive systems. This is a process that he introduces as women’s mission to indoctrinate the male. Our aim here is to detect such a missionary role in Ngugi’s female characters and to see if it works while it is employed by the story’s women.

To do this, we will rely on an exponential approach and close reading to identify oppressive behaviours of both white and black men, and try to recognise the nature and the function of such behaviour. Then we will compare different male characters and their attitude towards women, and analyse these characters’ treatment to women considering the amount of education they have received in the society. At the end we can decide if education has had any modifying effect on the male characters in the novel and their treatment of women.

THE NOVEL’S PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

The society that Ngugi portrays in *Weep Not, Child* is a highly patriarchal society in which the patriarchal conduct is not exclusively overwhelming women; it is a prevalent phenomenon that exists under the skin of a society in which as Kamau, Njoroge’s brother, comments, some people “don’t want others to rise above them” and aim to “be the source of knowledge and share it piecemeal to others less endowed” (WNC, p. 24). In this society women are sexually, physically and mentally oppressed and ill-treated. Rape and successive pregnancies, violence (verbal and physical), un/low paid domestic labour, attribution of taboos to women, sexual oppression and abuse, polygamy, and objectification of women are examples of the facets of oppression that women experience in a society in which class and race are determining factors of women’s life and identity.

Since family, as socialist feminists like Eisenstein, Rowbotham and Mitchell emphasise and Madsen simplifies it, is “a powerful instrument of socialization, where we learn to adopt particular postures in relation to the patriarchal power structure; that is, where we learn positions of subordination and domination” (2000, p. 185) we focus on the Ngotho’s family in which oppressive relations are at work. At times we will compare and contrast our findings about this family with other families in the story that are similar in terms of the hierarchical order and male-dominated atmosphere. This would help us, at the end, to generalise and see if what applies to Ngotho’s family is applicable to other families or not. But to avoid looking at Ngotho’s family out of its context we start with the whole society and try to discern its facets of oppression and then come back to Ngotho’s family and other families to synthesise our data on women’s status in both family and society.

While reading Ngugi’s novel enough attention must be paid to the black women who are doubly colonised indeed. Being colonised by the white Britons, they are also oppressed by the black men, and this is an extra burden that makes life more difficult for a class of Kenyans who is already being crushed by the white’s oppression. The narrator informs us that there are lots of women who were impregnated by Italian prisoners building the tarmac road, but he also interprets it as a sin committed by the poor women who surely have had no other option rather than sleeping with those men. Ironically enough, these poor women are looked upon and rejected by their own clan on the ground that they are sinners. These oppressed women’s children are reported to “have small wounds around the mouth so that flies followed them all the time and at all places”, and this is what the narrator considers “a punishment” for the black women who, he believes, should not have slept “with white men who ruled them and treated them badly” (WNC, p. 6). Killam and Kerfoot put emphasis on

this fact by writing that “one needs to take into account the double colonization of women, both as subjects of colonization and by patriarchal structures in African Societies (2008, p. 181).

In addition to that we see that men are dishonest and unfaithfulness toward their wives. Men cheat their wives by keeping them at home to work and do the domestic labour while they usually roam around, away from their wives, enjoying themselves “[loitering] in the town ... [avoiding] work” (WNC, P. 7) without having any consideration for their wives and their responsibilities toward them. The narrator makes it explicitly clear that many a time men are not honest with their wives. It seems a very frequent habit of men who lie to their wives that they are “going to buy some meat for the family” while they actually go to the town by avoiding the vigilance of their wives (WNC, P. 7). Ironically, these women know what the truth is; they already know that men go “to loiter in the town...to avoid work...and drink...while...[women] must live in toil and sweat”. This is while at such occasions these men “cannot even look at [women] in the face” because they already know that they “go and stay there the whole day” (WNC, p. 7).

To these obedient women, however, men are unkind and cruelly non-responsive and if we see any response, it is not devoid of violence and insult. Ngotho’s family is a good example of the families where, as socialist feminists put it, oppressive relations are at work to the benefit of men. Whatever Njeri and Nyokabi – Ngotho’s wives – do is to keep the centre unchallenged and untouched because the ideology is that “if you have a stable centre, then the family will hold” (WNC, p. 46); that is why they divide the house chores and domestic labour between themselves while the benefit of all they do goes to the centre, that is, of course, the man who is the head of the family.

But what makes women’s oppression worse is their omnipresent exposure to the harsh, debilitating language others use to communicate with them. While we are told that the African shopkeepers cheat and overcharge women, we are also informed that Indians “abused women, using dirty words they had learnt in Swahili...” (WNC, p. 8). Ironically, Indians who are themselves a colonised nation are colonising and oppressing the female Kenyans in their own turn. It is ironic that the word ‘fool’ in the language of the native people is attributed to men with a “wife who would not let him leave her lap even for a second” (WNC, p. 10). This seems to be more a well-conceived strategy to implement the patriarchal ideology than a simple lapse of tongue or momentous name-calling.

To the harsh, coercive language that overwhelms women in the story, we should add the sexual oppression that is always a threatening factor in women’s lives. Interestingly, white women are also sexually oppressed and exploited by black fighters like the barber who proudly talks about killing white men and sleeping with their women at the time of war. The barber says that he has paid these women to have sex with them and this, in its turn, indicates miserable situation of white women who have had to sell their bodies to earn their lives (WNC, p. 11). But more noticeable of all the examples of sexual oppression is the polygamy that is an apparent norm in the society and a well-established practice among Kenyan families partly because they look at women as possession, as lands, and as anything that can be a criterion in determining a man’s power or wealth.

OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN

As it appears in the novel, women and land are very similar in terms of the way they are understood and treated by men. As evidence, we can rely on Mr. Howlands’ idea about

the land he owns. The narrator of the story informs us that his farm resembles “the woman whom he had wooed and conquered. He had to keep an eye on her lest she should be possessed by someone else” (*WNC*, p. 144). This is an explicit show of one man’s understanding of women, but it is also an adroitly generalised picture of the way that women are exploited and oppressed both economically and sexually. The fact that at the night of his murder Mr. Howlands thinks of “[getting] the black woman he had taken the night before” is the evidence we get from the narrator’s comments (*WNC*, p. 144).

Not surprisingly, Ngotho too, looks at women and judges them only in terms of their physical appearance and sexual attraction. Love does not have anything to do with his marriages and his wives. As he admits himself he has married her wife because he has “pitied her” and because “Nobody could have taken her” (*WNC*, p. 26) – a humiliating justification that does not seem to be true. For Ngotho, a good wife (woman) is a “fleshy, black body with sweat ... a fat woman” not a woman that like his Memsahib’s wife is “so thin that [he] at times wondered if the woman had flesh at all” (*WNC*, p. 12). This is a sign of Ngotho’s (and other men’s) materialistic attitude towards women; a sign that justifies having more than one wife simultaneously. Although we are told that the two women in Ngotho’s family live happily together, we cannot be sure that they are living their ideal life; they have no other alternative under the rule of a dominating man like Ngotho.

Additionally, what the narrator tells us about Mr. Howlands and his wife is in line with what we hear about Ngotho and his wives. Howlands’ wife, too, is not being proposed to because of a heart-felt love, but because Howlands feels lonely on the African lands and goes to England to “[pick] the first woman who could get” without telling her that Africa “meant hardship and complete break from Europe” and to worsen it, we are informed that he becomes “oblivious of her boredom” when she is in the trap of African farm (*WNC*, p. 34).

WOMEN AS THE SOURCES OF EVIL

To exacerbate women’s situation in the novel is the fact that they are considered collages of vices and bad habits. As the narrator reveals it, in such society women are not to be trusted; they are “fickle, and very jealous... [that] no amount of beating would pacify [them].” Ironically, Ngotho’s home is “well-known for being a place of peace” because Ngotho “[does not beat his wives much]” (*WNC*, p. 12). As it is disclosed here, the beating practice is a normal treatment while its principles are passed from one generation to the other. Being exposed to a family where patriarchal conduct is dominating, Njoroge intakes bits and pieces of the ideology and tries to behave accordingly. We have an incident when Njoroge and Mwihaki are late on their way back from home to school. Finding his mother annoyed by their being late, Njoroge puts all the blame on Mwihaki, thinks of her as a “bad girl” and “[promises] himself that he would not play with her anymore” (*WNC*, p. 18) as if she is an evil creature to be seriously avoided.

In spite of the overwhelming oppression that the female characters in the novel are suffering from, and despite their miserable situation in a society in which women are the omnipresent targets of violence, subjugation and coercion, they prove themselves as much superior and more capable than male characters in terms of judgment, anticipation and prescience. To this we should add their dexterous political game play with the oppressive powers (white and black) who challenge them continuously.

SUPERIOR WOMEN AND THE INDOCTRINATION OF THE MALE

While the men's politics in the story is essentially based on impulsive decision-making, violence, revenge and struggle to achieve materialistic goals – taking over the lands they justifiably claim belongs to them – women's politics is essentially based on a long term goal that is a necessary acquired education for both male and female offspring. They believe that such strategy will result in an eventual gain of, at least, relative equality and freedom from oppression and subjugation, as well as, restoration of the land's historical ownership. In contrast, while Ngotho, as the representative of black men, "loves land historically, traditionally and even religiously" (Marah 1998, p.175) his idea of regaining the lost land through physical confrontation with the well-armed white people seems to be a stupid and ridiculous plan.

To substantiate what we argue here, we need to refer to the text again to see what happens that makes women's politics different from and superior to men's and to what extent women's politics is superior in terms of goal achievement. When we put Nyokabi and Ngotho's characterization in contrast, the woman, unlike her husband, is demonstrated to be of a sophisticated mind that is missing in the character of Ngotho. She thinks of, and cares for children's education and regards her son and daughter in equal terms. While, thanks to her struggles, Njoroge finds a way to school she contemplates on the idea of her married daughter going to school as well (WNC, p. 18-19), an idea that we never find Ngotho contemplating on.

Therefore, one important suppressed ability of women in *Weep Not, Child* is their sound judgment and correct political assessment of the situation. Ironically, at the assembly, where decisions are made on going to strike for a bigger payment, none of the women is a participant. There are only men who decide on going on a strike. When Ngotho is challenged by his wife, Njoroge's mother, not to join the strike, she is not tolerated and she is even beaten to stop speaking. From behind the lines we hear her prediction that the strike would fail and the family would lose the money coming from laboring for the Whites if the whole society is not ruinously affected by the uncalculated plan. However, Ngotho makes it clear that as a man he will do whatever he likes and that he will "never [take] orders from a woman" (WNC, p. 60).

This is another telling instance of the patriarchal conduct when women's sound judgment leads them nowhere in pushing men away from an impulsive, ill-designed strike that is suggested by some emotional, excited young folks and accepted by the old males who knowing not much about strikes just "[listen] with deep interest" saying that because it means "more money it [is] a good idea" (WNC, p. 58). Juliana, Jacobo's wife, is another example of a woman who is not listened to by men. We find her talking to herself saying that "a man will never heed the voice of a woman until it is too late" (WNC, p. 63).

Ironically, while almost all black men are focused on a messianic figure who would come and free them from the white people's oppression, Nyokabi knows too well that the black are the final loser because "white men are the same" (WNC, p. 84) bribing lawyers to act as they want. This is followed by Njeri's adroit analysis of law, rules and regulations that are all in favor of white people hindering the black from being free and independent. Interestingly enough, in Njeri's argument we find the description of what we call an ideology made by a superior class and used by them to impose things and oppress people.

It is to find a way to subvert this oppressive and patriarchal system that Nyokabi encourages Njoroge to go to school. While Ngotho's dream of having his farm back is just a dream that leads to disastrous events for his own family and other families too, Nyokabi's

dream of having an educated son who could do something for the family and the whole of black society blooms in flower. Njoroje's achievement in passing K.A.P.E and going to high school is a happy and memorable event that does not merely belong to Ngotho's family but to the whole society of black men and women who willingly "[contribute] money so that he could go" because "[he] was no longer the son of Ngotho but the son of the land" (WNC, p. 119).

This, in itself, is a proof of women's ability in bringing change to the society by teaching and indoctrinating throughout the process of mothering and socialising a child. Unlike Ngotho who is preoccupied with revenge and vengeance, waiting for a messiah to appear and save the whole nation, Nyokabi changes the dream to reality by sending her son to learn and acquire the knowledge he later needs to fight against any oppressive system. This would be possible if it was not for the stupid attack of Ngotho to Jacobo at the time of strike. By his impulsive and instinctive reaction to Jacobo's speech at the time of the strike Ngotho ruins everything that Nyokabi has already planned and achieved.

Although we cannot blame Ngotho for desiring his land back, he is to be blamed because of this impulsive attack to Jacobo that leads to the misery of the whole family and brings big tears to her wives' eyes. Ironically, while his repeated advice to his son, Njoroje, is to stick to education, his attack on Jacobo and his other son's following impulsive attempt to murder Jacobo is the very reason that detaches Njoroje from the education he loves more than anything else and makes him lose "education ... faith and ... family" altogether (WNC, p. 149). As a result, Ngotho and his sons prevent Njoroje from education while, to echo Bharat, "the role of education in nations struggling for freedom and identity is the central concern of *Weep Not, Child*" (2003, p. 35).

Not surprisingly it is Nyokabi who saves Njoroje's life and brings both light and life to him once more. The story comes to its ending with Njoroje coming to complete disappointment, having a rope on a tree to hang himself. But just a moment before committing suicide Nyokabi comes to him carrying a light in her hand and inviting her son back home. This can be interpreted in a symbolic way; the light that this woman carries would come to help Njoroje out of the darkness and confusion brought about by his father and brothers' violent bloodshed. The woman with the light in her hand is the carrier of hope to a son who has a lot ahead of him to learn and experience.

But what validates our argument about education and the role it plays in achieving equality and freedom – what women know and struggle for but men merely dream but do not follow – comes in the scenes preceding Jacobo's death by Ngotho's other son. In these scenes we find Njoroje coming across and talking to Stephen Howlands, the son of District Officer, a white man who is the present owner of the lands that historically belongs to Njoroje's father. But while Njoroje's brothers and father look at people like Stephen as an enemy, Njoroje's attitude toward Stephen is more that of a classmate and a neighbor. There are no hard feelings between them and we see no attempt in part of Stephen to impose himself on Njoroje. Also, we have no report of Njoroje's hatred toward the boy who ironically is against his father's decision to send him to England and is himself a victim of the patriarchal ideology.

While some may argue that this is out of Njoroje's cowardice and incapability to take a step against the oppressive race and class we argue that Njoroje's pacifism is the product of the education that he has received during his school days. Through education he has acquired the knowledge that violence and bloodshed is not going to bring freedom and equality to the society. Through years of education Njoroje has come to the idea that political endeavour is much superior and much fruitful than taking gun and shooting enemy in a face to face battle.

While Njoroge's attempt to commit suicide remains a dark spot that is the result of his father and brothers' blind actions, his mother's bringing light at the ending of the story and taking Njoroge's back home is a compensation for what they have done. We can take this action as another attempt of prescient women who believe education can be the fissure through which freedom and equality are achievable. As Mnthali maintains in this regard, "woman remains a beacon of hope and a source of strength to those who do not as yet see the light, which is the sum-total of the struggle for the land" (2004, p. 37). Nyokabi takes Njoroge back home to save him from suicide and to give him another chance to restart his half-finished education in the school of matri-culture.

CONCLUSION

Looking from a socialist feminist point of view, Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child*, appears to be a story of prevalent oppressive relations in the novel's society. While the Kenyans in this novel are all subjects to oppression and exploitation the burden of the suffering is doubled for women because they have to tolerate the oppressive and dominating treatment of their husbands and sons. Although both men and women desire to subvert the oppressive system that overwhelms them in various ways, the strategy that each group adopts to struggle against oppression is quite different. Accordingly, men's strategy to fight against oppression includes violence, terror and bloodshed until the messiah arrives to save the whole nation, but women's strategy has education as its basis. Women believe that education brings knowledge to the life of the oppressed and equips them with the power and political dexterity and understanding to oppose oppression and subvert the oppressive system. Such acquired power as Lalbakhsh et. al. interpret it, "is dynamic and productive" because while having resistance as one inherent component "has the space for acting in the power relation in a way that [one] can be far from the docile body who simply acts as normalised society demands" (2012, p. 50).

Moreover, the novel's women understand education as a means of indoctrination and socialization that comes to help women raise children different from the previous generation that in Mnthali's words "has a passive faith in the Gykuyo creation myth and its attendant legends" (2004, p. 34) of the messianic figure who comes and gets the lands back. The new generation that these women raise is also different in terms of their understanding of humane behaviour and equality between men and women. Njoroge's character undergoes such metamorphosis because of the education he receives during his school time. The patriarchal view that he seems to be developing at the beginning of the story fades away at the end and he comes to recognise Mwihaki as a woman equal to men in terms of rights and merits.

Accordingly, while men's adopted strategy ends in horrible bloodshed and destruction of both family and society, women's adopted strategy of education and indoctrination of the male blossoms in a metaphoric birth of a man that, unlike his biological and metaphorical father, is willing to take order from women and is closer to them in terms of sound judgment and correct assessment. By insisting on education that changes Njoroge's character and takes him steps ahead toward genuine humanity Nyokabi proves herself as a real missionary whose indoctrination of the male can be imitated by other women if they are seeking a world in which patriarchal and oppressive systems are subverted and neutralised.

REFERENCES

- Acker, J and Barry, K. (1984). "Comments on MacKinnon's, Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State," *Signs*, Vol. 10 (1). pp. 168-184.

- Bharat, M. (2003). *The Ultimate Colony: The Child in Postcolonial Fiction*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited.
- Gikandi, S. and Ewan M. (2007). *The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hansen, V. K. (1990). "Women's Unions and the Search for a Political Identity" In *Women, Class and the Feminist Imagination: A Socialist Feminist Reader*. Ed. Hansen, V. Karen and Ilene J. Philipson. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Killam, D. and Kerfoot, A. (2008). *Student Encyclopedia of African Literature*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.
- Kolawole, E. M. M. (1997). *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Lalbakhsh, P (a), and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya. (2011). "The Subversive Feminine: Sexual Oppression and Sexual Identity in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*". *Studies in Literature and Language*. Vol. 3 (3). pp. 92-97.
- (b), and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya. (2011). "Engendering the Feminine Power: Identity, Prescience and Anticipation in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* and *The Good Terrorist*". *Cross-cultural Communication*. Vol. 7 (4). pp. 30-35.
- et. al. (2012). "Hardy's Sue and Her Failure in the Mirror of Foucauldian Concept of Individuality". *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*. 18 (2). pp. 49 – 56.
- Madsen, L. D. (2000). *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. London: Pluto Press.
- Marah, K. J. (1998). *The African People in the Global Village: An Introduction to Pan-African Studies*. Maryland: University Press of America.
- Mnthali, F. (2004). "Narrative Design in the African Novel". *An Introduction to African Prose Narrative*. Ed. Lokangaka Losambe. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Ngugi, J. (1967). *Weep Not, Child*. Malta: Heinemann Educational Book Ltd. Referred to in the text as WNC.
- (1972). *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature and Politics*. Westport, CT: Lawrence and Hill.
- and Micere Githae Mugo. (2006). *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Sollars, D. M. (2008). *The Facts on File Companion to the World Novel: 1900 to the Present*. New York: Info Base Publishing.